



Historical Society of Decatur County

The Bulletin

Vol. 13 No.2

Summer 2008

Greensburg, Indiana

Epigraph-

"Politics like religion, hold up the torches of martyrdom to the reforms of error."

Thomas Jefferson, 1811

(letter to James Ogilvie)

Is politics still the "art of the possible" ...?

apologies to

Otto Von Bismarck, 1867

A Good Man Gone

A. P. Bone, One of Greensburg's Best Known Citizens,

Called Home

This is the 9th in a series of obits of well known men and women of Greensburg and Decatur County, who helped shape the city and county into what we have today. Edited by Russell Wilhoit, Decatur County Historian



At noon Sunday, July 7, 1907, at his home on East North Street, the spirit of Alfred P. Bone winged its flight to that far away country from whence no traveler returns.

For three weeks Mr. Bone had been confined to his home suffering from kidney trouble, an ailment that had relentlessly preyed upon him for several years; but his friends generally thought he would rally from the attack as he had done many times before. But such was not the case Saturday afternoon. He became partially unconscious and at midnight sank into a comatose condition that finally ended peacefully and quietly in death twelve hours later. He had expressed a desire that he should pass away on the Lord's Day while worship was being held in the Christian church where he had officiated as an elder for almost twenty years. This wish passed into a reality.

Alfred Plummer Bone was born near Flatrock, Shelby County, September 26, 1836, and received a common school education. On December 17, 1856, he was united in marriage to Miss Louisa M. Deacon, a neighbor girl and schoolmate who survives her husband after more than a half century of happy wedded life. Last December they celebrated their golden wedding at the home of their son, A. R. Bone, in Chicago.

To the union of Mr. and Mrs. Bone were born six children as follows: Scott C. Bone, now editor of the Washington (D.C.) Herald; Mrs. Sadie Morris and Alfred R. Bone, of Chicago; Mrs. Lora Culbertson who died January 2, 1895, at Shelbyville; Mrs. Mae Bone Parrish who resides on a farm near Greensburg, and John C. Bone, of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The five surviving children were all present at the funeral services except John C. Bone who returned home ten days ago after a week's visit with his father; also two sisters, Mrs. Arthur Floyd, of Shelbyville, and Mrs. Shelby Sexton, of North Manchester, and a brother, Thomas, of Shelby County.

Mr. Bone's early life was spent in Shelby County where he was engaged in the milling business at Bone's mill, near Flatrock Cave. It was when thus engaged in August 1862, surrounded by a happy family, consisting of his wife and three children, that he heard the duty call to take up arms to preserve the Union. He enlisted in Company D, 33rd Indiana Regiment, under command of Colonel John Coburn who still lives in Indianapolis, and was in the forefront of Sherman's army that made the memorable march to the sea. Mr. Bone was

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President's Letter

A final bit of business regarding the construction of the new addition to the museum took place last week. We received from the architect, Thomas Gordon Smith, the final drawings of how the museum was actually built. In the future, should the need arise to make any additional changes in the building. These drawings will be very helpful. They were expensive, and it would have been easy to let future generations deal with not knowing how the wiring is distributed throughout the building and such. But the Society built the museum "for the ages," and modest investments today will go a long way in perpetuating its existence. Our museum is world-class and our mission is to preserve it as such.

Another final bit of business regarding the new construction is the acquisition of a new sign for the front yard. Our new sign will be bigger and more visible from the street. We hope to have installation complete by late summer. Something else new is the consideration being given to the creation of a web-site for the Historical Society. The site will be useful in that anyone anywhere could obtain information about our society, get updates on scheduled activities, renew memberships, see the latest acquisitions to the museum, and so on. This is going to take some time, but we are all very excited about having our own web-site.

The Membership Committee has some exciting plans for expanding the Society's involvement in our community. After four years of being focused on the new construction, we can now turn our attention to expanding our membership and increasing our visibility. The Society's new board of directors is looking forward to this challenging and exciting time of growth. I want to welcome new board members, Tom Hunter and Elizabeth Bailey. I am looking forward to working with them in meeting the goals of our society. It's going to be a busy summer.

Tom Barker
President

If you have a wig or hairpiece that you no longer need, the museum would like to have it for the exhibits.

Do you know of a thesis or dissertation done by a Decatur County native or about a Decatur County subject? We would love to have a copy for our archives.

Old pictures - don't throw them away. Call us, you just might have the ones we are looking for.

Museum office: (812)663-2764. Check the date on your address label to see when your membership expires.

Membership rates are as follows:

Student	\$ 10.00 per year
Individual	\$ 15.00 per year
Family	\$ 25.00 per year
Patron	\$ 50.00 per year
Historian	\$100.00 per year
Lifetime	\$500.00 (one-time payment)

Circle type of membership at left.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Membership dues for 2008 can be mailed in now.

Mail to: Historical Society, P.O. Box 163, Greensburg, IN 47240 - Attn: Dues

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captured on this march and taken to Libby prison from which he was released the day before Richmond fell. A. N. Graham of this city, served in the same company.

Returning home Mr. Bone again resumed the milling business, and four years later, in 1869, moved to Shelbyville where he remained until December 19, 1887, when he moved to Greensburg.

In 1874 General Grant honored Mr. Bone by appointing him as postmaster at Shelbyville, a position he held with credit for ten and one-half years.

He came to Greensburg to take charge of the only telephone plant then in the city. It was a small affair, but under the management and ownership of Mr. Bone, became one of the best plants in the state. The later Brutus Hamilton joined the deceased in the telephone business in 1892, and they remained partners until the plant was absorbed by the Central Union Telephone Company in 1902.

Soon afterward Mr. Bone purchased a farm five miles southeast of this city and retired from active business life. He was known as the "Father" of the telephone in Decatur County. His business took him into every nook and corner of the county, and he became one of our best known men in the county. He made friends wherever he went and no wonder that throughout the county it was said: "A good man has gone."

Mr. Bone was a staunch Republican, a Knight Templar Mason, Red Man and a member of the Christian Church for over fifty years. He was an enthusiastic Mason and had filled practically all the offices in the local Blue Lodge, Chapter and Council. The principles of the order found in him a noble exemplar, and in Masonic circles he was a bright and shining light whose kindly influence will abide in the hearts of this brethren as long as life shall last.

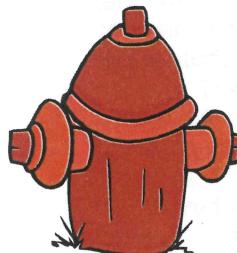
He was a good Mason because he was a good Christian. His highest joy was found in helping to lead men into that higher life which is found only in Christ Jesus. His favorite hymn was "Jesus Lover of My Soul," and his favorite chapter in the Bible was the twelfth chapter of Romans. The loss of such a man to any community is irreparable.

Funeral services were held in the Christian Church Tuesday afternoon at 2:30, Rev. James Mailley and Rev. D. R. VanBuskirk each making short addresses. Rev. A. T. Rankin offered prayer. Rev. VanBuskirk had preached Mr. Bone's mother's funeral in 1869.

The G.A.R. and Masons attended in a body and performed their last sad rites at the grave of their deceased comrade and brother. Baldwin Commandery No. 2 Knights Templar, of Shelbyville, sent a guard of honor.

The pall bearers were A. N. Graham, J. F. Childs, T. M. Mozingo, G. W. Byers, C. T. Pleak and L. D. Bradon.

Note: A.P. Bone, is buried in South park cemetery. As soon as you come into the cemetery, turn left at first road, then look directly to your right. A P Bone's tombstone sits close to the road in about the 3rd or 4th row. R.W.



Why We Call a Fire Hydrant a Fire Plug

Put in a plug for the fire hydrant. In the early days of Cincinnati, water mains were made of wood. In case of a fire, it was necessary to dig down to the water line and chop a hole in the wooden main. The excavation filled with water, and a bucket brigade passed buckets of water to the scene of the fire. After the fire was put out, a wooden plug was driven into the main to stop the water flow. The location of the plug was noted and, in subsequent emergencies, fire-fighters simply dug a new hole where the plug was known to exist. In case you've wondered why a fire axe has a pointed end as well as a blade, now you know. The pointed blade was used to extract the plug.

Martha and Dale Davis and The Galley

In May of 1952, Miss Geneva Risk, a high school teacher in Greensburg, collected donations from the community to start a youth center in the vacant Palms Drug Store on North Broadway Street. The center became successful, but the double demands on Geneva's time sent her to the City Council to seek their support. The Council saw the benefits and agreed to support the center. In September, 1952, Martha Davis became the full time, paid director, and her husband, Dale, devoted the same amount of time and effort, but as a volunteer.

Martha held a contest to give the youth center a name. The one chosen was "The Galley." The girl who won the contest was given a year's membership. She explained her reasons behind the name: a galley is a place to eat on a ship, and the Greensburg High School sports teams were the Pirates, who sailed on ships with galleys. The members elected a youth board consisting of five members. The youth board planned events such as parties and dances, which the Davis' sanctioned and chaperoned. There was also a five member adult governing board consisting of community members who helped with extra duties and guidance. The youth officers, accompanied by Martha and Dale, attended the yearly Governor's Council on Recreation held in Indianapolis or Bloomington. It was at these conferences that the Galley was honored every year, and eventually the center was honored as the longest running youth center in the state.

Junior High students could come to the center on Mondays and Tuesdays, while Thursdays through Saturdays were reserved for the high school students. The Galley was closed on Wednesdays because of church services.

A year's membership cost \$1.00, and the students were required to show their membership cards and sign in. If parents called about their children's whereabouts, the sign-in sheet was consulted. Eventually the Galley grew to 500 members.

While at the center, students enjoyed ping-pong, board games, magazines, a 5-cent per play juke box., and the dance floor. The fully furnished soda fountain was especially appreciated. Members worked the counter, making sodas and drinks for their friends and fellow students.

The young people came in after school to do homework or just to enjoy the fellowship. They also came to the Galley after ball games, sometimes as many as 150-200 an evening. In the summer Dale remembered the dozens of bicycles parked in front of the Galley on a hot afternoon and evening." You could hardly get down the sidewalk!"

Perhaps one of the greatest visions Martha and Dale had was to allow girls to come to the Galley. At this time, girls were not allowed in the local YMCA. Martha

and Dale thought this policy was wrong and welcomed boys and girls equally. It was soon after the Galley set this precedent, that the YMCA changed its policy as well.

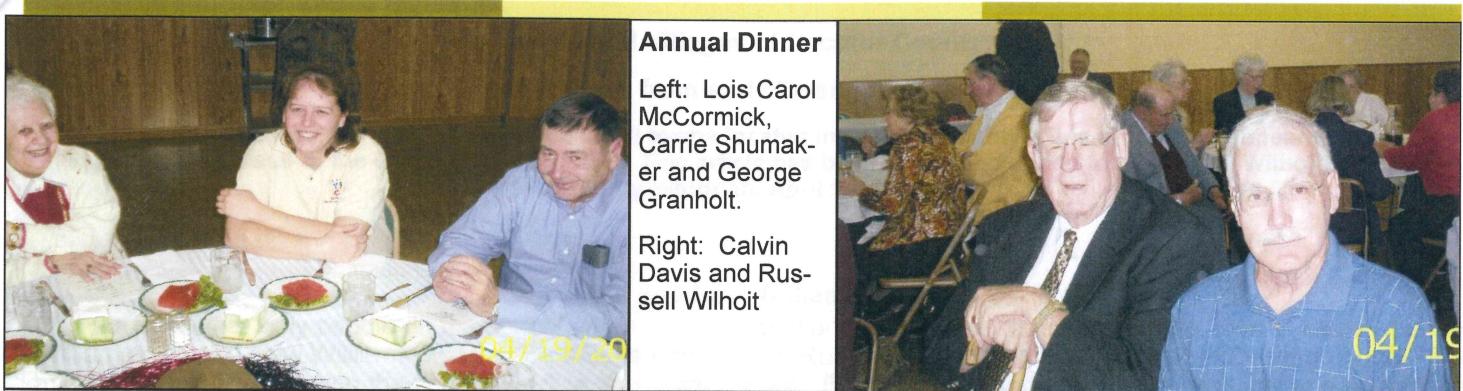
The members formed their own dance band, the board bought the music, and Martha remembers the windows rattling when the band played. She made the youngsters responsible for cleaning every Saturday morning, and every member had to take a turn. There was more than one instance of learning how to "run a mop."

Martha stressed the importance of regular hours at the Galley. "The kids knew we would always be there for them." She also imposed a dress code at dances. The boys had to wear a suit and tie and the girls, dresses. Of course, there was never any smoking or drinking allowed. Another tribute to the Galley's success came when a recreation professor from Indiana University sent his students to Greensburg to study the Galley's operation in order to see how a youth center should function.

Martha and Dale were generous with their time, patience, and love for the Galley "kids." Martha has said, "The Galley helped kids find themselves," and "We were always happy to give counsel and support." Many of the young people went on to become the pride of Martha and Dale. One served in the Blue Angels, several became judges, and many are doctors and lawyers.

Galley membership was available through high school and one year after. However, after seventeen years of operation and seeing over 8000 students pass through the Galley doors, new schools were built and additional sports and other activities were offered after school. The first drive-in restaurant opened, cars became easier to acquire, and gasoline was cheap. The Galley became a victim of the times, attendance dwindled, and the youth center closed its doors in December, 1969.

Martha and Dale positively impacted an entire generation of youth in Greensburg for the better part of two decades. They built the Galley into the most successful youth center in Indiana, and a great number of the Galley "kids" carry a special place in their hearts for Martha and Dale. Life's lessons are taught in many places.



Bill Ford's Work

The Society was indeed honored to have Mr. Bill Ford present the program at our annual meeting on April 19, 2008. For several years, Bill has compiled the service records of Decatur County veterans. While the information Bill has made available is valuable in itself, there is an additional lesson we can take from his presentation: the lesson of dedication. The sheer volume of material gathered by Mr. Ford about our military veterans is astounding, and the results of his work attest to an undertaking which merits both our respect and our gratitude. The editor of the Bulletin is reminded of a stanza from Rudyard Kipling's poem, *Recessional*:

God of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle line,
Beneath whose awful hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine-
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget- lest we forget!

Bill Ford's work won't let us forget.

Decatur County Veterans Information

Decatur County Veterans Service - Office
Old Washington School
Monday and Tuesday
Hours: 9:30-11:30 and 1:30-4:00
663-3161



Bill and Willa Ford with a few of their files in the background

Greensburg Public Library
Indiana Room
Veterans Reference Shelf

Website
Veterans History Project
<http://www.loc.gov/vets/>

Search screens: search by name

When the response comes up, you may see a heading:
View Digital Collection. Click on this to view documents
or head interviews.

Two searches to get you started:
Bailey, Kathryn Ernsts
Hunter, Oliver

Towns and Villages of Decatur County:

Reprints of Articles from early Twentieth Century Papers

This is the 10th in a series of articles about the small towns located in Decatur County. This article first appeared in the October 14, 1914 issue of the Greensburg Standard. This article has been edited and added to by Russell Wilhoit, Decatur County Historian, April 14, 2008.

Old and New Williamstown

St. Paul is not the "only pebble on the beach" when it comes to county line towns, "there are others," two at least, viz: Old Williamstown and New Williamstown – each with its north half in Rush and each with its south half in Decatur county. The middle of Main Street being the county dividing line in each town. But it is of the senior town we shall first speak, and that is

Old Williamstown

Not one semblance is there today in Williamstown to remind the visitor of its once prosperous days at the beginning of and during the Civil War from 1861 to 1865, when the little village had its blacksmith shops, general stores, saw mill, post office and so forth.

It was during the dark and bloody days of the opening of the rebellion in 1861, that William Williams (grandfather of "Buddie" Williams) succeeded in locating a post office in the little hamlet, and at the same time the town was named after him and in his honor.

The same year a Mr. Tatum and James Trimble each located general stores in the town, and a Mr. Bronson also established a blacksmith shop.

In 1862 Greene Woodard opened another general store, and soon thereafter came Boliver Jackson and James Martin Fishback, who each owned and operated blacksmith shops.

The next enterprise was started during the year 1863, and was a saw mill ran by William Moulder and J. C. Bell.

With the close of the war in 1865 the post office was discontinued until 1871, when it was re-established through the efforts of James H. Parker, who moved from Milroy to Old Williamstown in 1859 and opened a general store. His brother, John S. Parker, was commissioned postmaster on the re-establishment of the office.

James H. Parker related to the writer quite an interesting story concerning a big political rally that was held in Old Williamstown during the national campaign of 1856, when John C. Fremont was a candidate for President of the United States on the Abolitionist ticket.

The people came from all parts of Rush, Decatur and adjoining counties in great numbers, and it was a large and enthusiastic meeting, and ye olden time speakers poured forth oratory in unlimited supplies, through not so choice in quality.

Murdered His Neighbor

In the mid-summer of the year 1872 Lon Bryson and a man by the name of Toole (* his first name was either James or John ??) – neighbors to each other and also to James H. Parker, all residing in old Williamstown – borrowed a team of horses and a farm wagon from Mr. Parker, and with a little child, daughter of Mr. Bryson, seated in the wagon with them, started on their way to Rushville to do some trading.

While at Rushville Bryson filled his carcass with rot-gut whisky, and on the return trip home became very abusive to his innocent little daughter, and was not only threatening her but was in the act of doing her great bodily harm when Mr. Toole interfered on behalf of the child. Then Bryson became so enraged he acted the part of a wild and maddened beast, pulling his revolver and pointing it directly at Mr. Toole who leaped from the wagon and ran behind it. With murder in his heart Bryson also leaped from the wagon, and as Toole made an effort to escape, Bryson shot him to death, emptying three or four chambers of his revolver before he succeeded in stilling the beating of his blameless and helpless victim's heart.

Bryson was given a trial at Rushville, and on the charge of murder received a life sentence to the penitentiary, where he was confined and remained for ten or twelve years, and becoming a victim of that dread disease, tuberculosis, was pardoned upon petition, returned home and died within a few months after regaining his liberty.

Oldest Living Resident

William Thomas Fleetwood is the oldest living resident of Old Williamstown, being on the shady side of his seventy-eighth birthday anniversary.

Mr. Fleetwood is a native born Kentuckian and came to the village in the early days, when giant trees, dense forests, wild pigeons, wild turkeys, mud roads that would take your wagon in their "embrace" to the extent of hub deep, together with great swamps and treacherous quagmires and sloughs predominating. But, happy is Mr. Fleetwood to know and to not only have been witness but a participant in making this one time wilderness blossom as the rose and bring forth abundant crops of all kinds.

The first house built in the old town was a log house, is still standing and is occupied by William Bradley and family. It is seventy-five years old and the logs are in a good state of preservation.

The Michigan division of the Big Four railroad was built just one-half mile east of Old Williamstown in 1882, when the post office was moved over to it and the place named

(Continued from page 6)

"New Williamstown"

and thus it will be seen that Old Williamstown had a rival that "outrivaled" her in the newly laid out town, and a rival that not only gobbled all her business enterprises but about all of her inhabitants as well, and thereby the death knell of the old town was sounded in a business way at least.

New Williamstown was platted in 1882 by Rodney Spencer and adapted its name immediately thereafter.

The first house, a frame, was built in 1882 by Mrs. Emaline Amburn, and is still being used as a residence.

Our venerable friend, Israel D. Jewett, was the first merchant and he conducted a general store and was also ticket and freight agent for the railroad company.

James H. Parker erected a frame residence in the middle of a corn field, and which is now the center of town. He and his brother, John S., succeeded Mr. Jewett in the general store business, and James H. Parker also succeeded Mr. Jewett as ticket and freight agent.

For twenty-seven long years James H. Parker has been the accommodating ticket and freight agent here. The giant-like and beautiful maple shade trees that spread their sun-protecting branches over the sidewalks on the south side of Main Street were planted by Mr. Parker in 1881.

We were shown an old relic in the way of a post office "outfit" and it is the identical outfit used in the Old Williamstown post office by William Williams during his term as postmaster from '61 to '65. It is the post office desk and boxes combined, consisting of a wooden box two feet high, three feet long and two and one-half feet wide, containing four pigeon holes for boxes in which letters and newspapers were placed, and certainly was made by some student of the handsaw and hatchet class of carpenters. It is rough, unpainted and resembles anything but a post office outfit – including desk and boxes. It is now the property of and a keepsake of James H. Parker.

Large Elevator

The elevator was built in 1882 by William Duncan, and is now owned by Williams & Clemons, who have shipped from here this year between 20,000 and 25,000 bushels of wheat, to say nothing of the corn, oats, clover and timothy seed. They are just now adding new scales of the Fairbanks make, and do a splendid business during the grain and seed season.

Tile Factory

The largest enterprise of the town is the tile factory of Arbuckle & Co., which is run on an extensive scale. They employ from fifteen to twenty men; manufacture the best quality of tile in all sizes, from twenty down to four inch; they also manufacture brick and have in operation five large kilns. They own five good, strong natural gas wells and from these wells is supplied the fuel for both "burning" tile and brick. The company ships large quantities of both tile and brick to foreign customers and ha a splendid home, or local trade.

A general store is owned and operated by Joseph Clemons & Son, who seem to be prospering and catering to the wants of their numerous customers.

The town has three good, strong natural gas wells, and all are owned by the citizens, and these wells has been furnishing an abundant supply of gas for heating and cooking purposes for every family in the town for the past ten years, and the pressure seems to be as strong today as when the wells were first "tapped." Every family in the town owns one or more shares in each of the three wells, and the cost for the entire ten years has been but sixty-five dollars per share. Cheap enough for anybody.

Churches

Two churches are located here – the Holiness Church is a brick building thirty by forty feet, is neat, well-kept, and regular weekly services are held by Rev. Joseph Waynescott, the pastor.

"The Church of God" is a frame building, thirty-six by forty-eight feet and at present is without a pastor and with but few followers.

The town has not now nor never has had a school or school building, though within a radius of one mile east, one mile west, one mile north and one-half mile south, are eighty-five children of school age who either have to go to Milroy or Sandusky via back line to seek an education. In as much as there is not one iota of evidence of race suicide in this neck o' the woods, it does seem to us that the trustee on the Rush county side and the trustee on the Decatur side would be wholly justified in giving the little town a school.

Prominent Farmers

Surrounding the little town are some of the most prominent and influential farmers of the two counties – Rush and Decatur – among them we mention Roy Smith, Ray Shelhorn, Bert Spurgeon, Emory Power, William Julian, Carol O. Kennett, E. J. Amos, Oliver Goddard, John Sefton, Walter Sefton, and others.

The farm lands are rich, productive and well improved, including some of the finest farm residences and barns in the country.

Next issue we will travel over to the little town of Letts located in Sandcreek Township.

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(Continued from page 7)

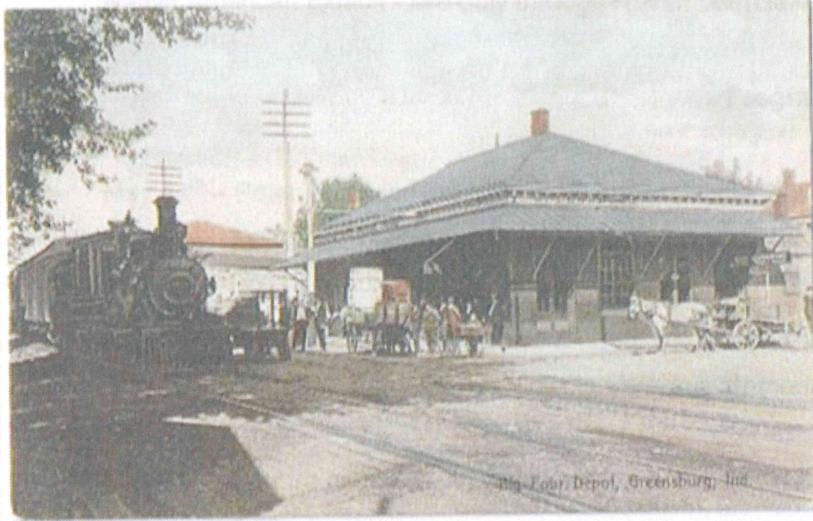
See you then, Russell

Notes:

*1870 Decatur County Census, Clinton twp

**- Buried in Springhill cemetery

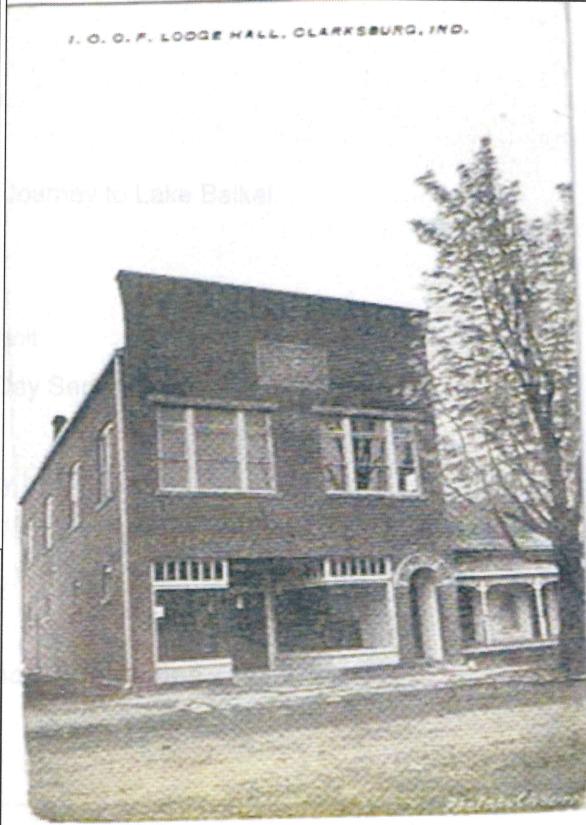
Vintage Postcards



Above: circa 1907 - Second Greensburg train station or depot that was located near where the current Greensburg Daily News building stands at 135 South Franklin Street

Right: circa 1908 - Clarksburg I.O.O.F. Home

This is a 4th in a series of photos from my postcard collection of Greensburg and Decatur County . Russell Wilhoit, Decatur County Historian.



1958 Income and Prices

Average income: \$4,650

Prices on selected items:

House: \$30,000

Ford car: \$3929

Milk: \$1.01

Gasoline: \$.24 per gal.

Bread: \$.19

1st class stamp: \$.04

Boxed spaghetti \$.19

Corned beef: \$.59/lb.

Swiss steak: \$.75lb.

Tomato juice: 5 (46 oz.) cans \$1.00

Caramels: \$.37 / 1 lb.

Coming Events and Current Exhibits

Current Exhibits

Conwell dishes from 1843 – Dining Room of the Museum

Tiptoe Through the Tulips (Textiles with a floral flair) Textile Display Room

Tool exhibit - Gallery

Coming Exhibits

Prom Dress Exhibit – opens May ^{3rd} through July

Decatur County Stone Arch Bridges photographs (Upstairs hallway)

Memorial Day Exhibit with emphasis on World War I

School Exhibit - August through October

Native American Exhibit - Mid-July through November (Gallery)

Programs

May 14th – Peter Thomson discussing his book “Sacred Sea: a Journey to Lake Baikal.

7:00 in the Gallery at the Museum.

May 26th - Memorial Day – Tour of South Park with Russell Wilhoit

(tour will take place immediately following Veterans Memorial Day Service)

May 31st - Lecture on the Stone Arch Bridges of Decatur County by Dr. Cooper

7:00

Call the office for reservations and more information - 663-2764

PROGRAM NOTE

Diana Springmier announces an extremely interesting program which will be presented by Mr. Peter Thomson on Wednesday, May 14th, at 7:00 p.m. in the museum's gallery. Mr. Thomson is the grandson of Wm. Orville Thomson, well-known Greensburg native. Peter Thomson's program is based on his recently published book, *Sacred Sea: a Journey to Lake Baikal*. This account is an autobiographical story of Mr. Thomson who, accompanied by his brother, traveled to Lake Baikal, the enormous body of water located in eastern Siberia. According to the author, this journey was a life-changing experience. Mr. Thomson formerly served as the environmental editor for National Public Radio.

A reception will follow Mr. Thomson's presentation, during which autographed copies of his book will be available. Please call the museum at 812-663-2764 to reserve a seat.

Editor of the Bulletin

George Granholt
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Tri-County Genealogist

Irene Krieger
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Batesville, IN 47006

“The Bulletin”
See page 9 for the exciting things happening at the museum.

Society's Officers

President: Tom Barker
Vice-President: Bryan Robbins
Treasurer: Linda Volk
Corresponding Secretary: Diana Springmier
Recording Secretary: Elizabeth Bailey

Board of Directors

Roy Connor	Ginny Garvey
Lynda Smith	Mike McCoy
Jim Rosenberry	Dennis Wilson
Polly Matlock	Tom Hunter

Society's Agent

William H. Robbins

Museum Director

Diana Springmier

Historical Society of Decatur County Museum

Museum Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 10:00 to 2:00 Saturday 10:00 to 2:00 and Sunday 1:00 to 4:00 - April thru December
Museum phone/fax: 663-2764
Email: dechissoc@etczone.net
After hours call 663-2997 or 663-5141

Check your address label for membership expiration date!

Museum est. 1984
Society est. 1957



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Historical Society of Decatur County



Vol. 13 No.3

Historical Society of Decatur County

The Bulletin

Fall 2008

Greensburg, Indiana

EPICRAPH

*O! Thus be it ever, when free men
shall stand*

*Between their loved home and the
war's desolation!*

*Blest with victory and peace, may
the heav'n rescued land*

*Praise the power that hath made
and preserved us a nation.*

*Then conquer we must, when our
cause it is just,*

*And this be our motto: "In God is
our trust."*

*And the star-spangled banner in
triumph shall wave,*

*O'er the land of the free and the
home of the brave!*

Francis Scott Key

**The Star-Spangled Banner, Verse 4
1814**

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Election Year

Harken to me fellow citizens and be of good cheer,
We are going through that ordeal known as election year.

Each day in the mail gobs of material do arrive,
Touting the virtues of every candidate alive.

We are bombarded with propaganda from morn 'till night.
Our problems will vanish if only we vote right.

Send these would-be office holders a contribution and see.
Once they are in office they will surely forget thee.
Great promises they make without the least conception.
Of how they can be delivered will be beyond recollection.
Promises of tax cuts and reduction of bloated bureaucracy,

Tempts every ear in this tired old democracy.
Our memories are short, our perception is dull,
We've heard this tune before, this song of the bull.

Just send your money and vote like we say.
Once we're in office, with your tax dollars we'll play.
Boondoggles, pork barrels, and all kinds of schemes,
Will be promoted beyond the wildest of dreams.
How can we pay for those goodies so wondrously described?

Why, Simpleton, don't you know, it comes out of your hide!
So the moral of this crude verse is this: cast your ballot with care.

There is no "free lunch," not on this earth or anywhere.

by Allan Beall

Reprinted from "The Bulletin" of November, 1988

The following article is reprinted from "The Bulletin"

Pole Raising

A Patriotic Retrospective

As the present election nears, with all its "whoop and holler," I recall that my father, the late Ambrose Hickman, used to tell me about "pole raisings" that took place during political campaigns in his boyhood days. Looking through the notes he left me, I found he had made specific mention of one.

Living at present [in Lexington, Virginia, 1968] in a town blessed with three libraries, I decided to research the subject. After much searching I came up with [only] one reference to "Pole Raising." (Ed's note: The source of the reference is not given).

The Liberty Tree was an elm in Boston upon which effigies of Stamp Act officials were hung in 1765. It became a rallying center for rebellious citizens, and "duplicate" Liberty Trees, [simply] poles, were set up in other towns. The one erected by the Sons of Liberty, on the Commons in New York City [was] "a pine post where they daily exercise, called by them Tree of Liberty." This was soon felled by the British soldiers. Six poles in all were raised there, all save the last, being destroyed by the soldiery, sometimes amid riotous scenes. The fifth pole was heavily banded with iron near its base, and deeply planted; yet soldiers succeeded in throwing it down-which brought on the Battle of Golden Hill. Pole raisings thereafter, until long after the Revolution, were enthusiastic ceremonies, and the pole gradually developed into a flag pole-sometimes crowned with a "Liberty Cap" - [which became] a rallying place for the community.

My father's notes state that pole raising had been made popular in Andrew Jackson's race for the Presidency, and that the Democrats used a hickory pole, and the Republicans used a poplar pole. Each raised a flag to the top of the pole.

In my father's early boyhood days it was customary for the opposing side to try to cut down the pole. As a result, the young men in the neighborhood "stood guard" around the pole the first few nights after it was raised. One such fight, according to his notes, took place at the corner of the "Wise Farm"-which later became my father's farm-at the corner of Decatur and Franklin counties, a mile and a half east of New Pennington, where the Republicans had raised a flag pole of poplar.

One night three of my father's older brothers, Lafayette, Frances, and Cassius Hickman, were designated as "pole watchers." They came home about midnight with black eyes and bloody noses. They had been set upon by Mike Powers, Edward Hart, and Nathaniel Hart. The Hickman brothers saved the pole, but six young men had all the fighting they wanted that night. My grandmother Hickman firmly put her foot down on any more "pole watching."

In my own time I remember one pole raising. If memory serves me correctly, this must have been the campaign for the election of Theodore Roosevelt in 1904. Neal McCallum, editor of the *Batesville Tribune*, spoke in the Mt. Etna schoolhouse, at what was called a "Patriotic Meeting." McCallum was an ardent Republican, so I am sure it was a Republican pole raising, with a poplar pole. The school children marched two by two behind the "fife and drum corps" [consisting] of Arch and Bert Paramore and Allen Hart. The adults followed to the corner of Isaac Farmer Sr.'s-Grandpa Farmer to all of us- farm just across the road from the spot where the pole stood, [as] my father remembered.

The pole had been previously cut and trimmed to proper size. A hole of proper depth had been dug. Guy lines were manned by the men in the crowd, and the pole was soon set in place. A pulley and rope had been attached to the pole, and two young men of the neighborhood attached the flag, pulled it to the top of the pole, and secured the rope around the pole. The fife and drum corps may have rendered patriotic music as a grand finale, but I do not recall that. After the election was over, the flag was pulled down, and the post cut down, about "fence post high." I remember it being there for many years.

Four years ago this fall, I was in Indiana in October. I recall reading in the [Batesville] *Herald Tribune* of a pole raising in St. Leon, Dearborn County, where the custom has survived.

President's Letter

In just a few weeks the new addition to the museum will be two years old. How fast the time passes! It is very gratifying to see our new facility being used by our members and the community at large. Every time I stop by the museum to take care of some business I am struck by how busy the place always seems to be. It is common to see the museum wall to wall with school children or people doing research in the archives or tourists from any part of the globe who have come to Greensburg to visit what is certainly a world-class facility. Our Society and our Museum are the envy of other historical societies in the region. I attribute our success to our volunteers who give so much of themselves and their time to ensure that our institution will be around long after we are all gone. It was our charge to the architect, Thomas Gordon Smith, to build a museum "for the ages." That charge was fulfilled. Come by the museum sometime during our open hours. You will be impressed with the activities within.

If you come by in a few weeks you will see our new sign which will be going up in the front yard. Our new sign is larger and more handsome than the old one. Plus, it is two-sided, allowing traffic from both directions to easily read our hours and any special messages. We are also getting a new sidewalk to the parking area in the back. The new sidewalk will have a more solid base allowing for easier walking and moving of supplies into the museum. The most exciting news of all is that the Society is creating a web-site. Soon, anyone can go to our web-site, and get the latest information regarding several areas of interest. Board member Elizabeth Bailey is working on our web-site, and we are all looking forward to our first visit.

A final note. I was downtown recently observing our tree on the courthouse tower being trimmed. Naturally, I recorded the proceedings on videotape. By coincidence, a few days later, Society board member Roy Connor gave me some old 8mm films to transfer to video. Imagine my delight when I saw on one of his reels the tree on the courthouse tower being trimmed...in 1958! Exactly fifty years ago. The tower looks very different today certainly, but the tree looked no different in 1958 than it does today. Apparently, for some things, time can stand still.

Tom Barker
President of the Board
Historical Society of Decatur County

Membership rates are as follows:

Student	\$ 10.00 per year
Individual	\$ 15.00 per year
Family	\$ 25.00 per year
Patron	\$ 50.00 per year
Historian	\$100.00 per year
Lifetime	\$500.00 (one-time payment)

Circle type of membership at left.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Mail to: Historical Society, P.O. Box 163, Greensburg, IN 47240 - Attn: Dues

Museum Musings

By Diana Springmier

The museum has had a very involved spring and summer. The exhibit of vintage formal gowns and prom dresses was the background for the May Ladies' Spring Luncheon and Style Show in the downstairs parlors. A delightful afternoon was attended by thirty guests. Co-chairing the event were Society members, Nancy Cuskaden and Helen Hamilton.

A restful stop for refreshments on the museum front porch was the place to be for those on the downtown garden tour in June. Eighty gardening enthusiasts visited the museum and gardens on a beautiful sunny Saturday in June.

Two retired educators, Ben Morris, an archaeologist, and Calvin Davis, a former Duke University history professor, met at the museum. They are seen weekly exchanging ideas. Ben has been preparing for the August opening of the Native American Artifacts exhibit.

Summer interns, Cory Parks and Josia Dixon, both Greensburg Community High School students, have been very helpful. Cory has been digitizing photographs on the computer and is helping set up the forthcoming exhibit; Josia works in the archives section. Other students have also indicated an interest in the museum and participating in its workings. Let's encourage our young people to get involved. They are the future.

The Fourth of July Open House, following the traditional parade, welcomed many children and their parents and grandparents. They viewed the gowns in the North and South Parlors, and also enjoyed looking at the Gallery's closing exhibit of tools used by Decatur County residents a century or two ago. The Craig coverlets were additional items of interest. The upstairs textile room's exhibit of 20th Century summer clothing was on view as well. Since their opening on May 1st of this year, these exhibits have been viewed by over 300 guests.

The Fourth of July's lemonade stand, on the front porch and out of the rain, was operated by three young cousins who had gathered for the festivities. Madalyn Wickens of Greensburg, Casey McClendon from Richmond, Virginia, and Abby Wiser, of Goldsboro, North Carolina, made up the interstate sales personnel. The patriotic spirit inside the museum was in sharp contrast to the dreary weather outside.

This summer has seen weekly visits of YMCA Day Camp youngsters, Home Extension members on group tours, many researchers in the archival area, and numerous visitors from as far away as South Korea and the United Kingdom.

The two upcoming exhibits, Native American Artifacts and Early Decatur County Schools, will provide interesting viewing this fall. You will not be disappointed in the efforts our volunteers are making.

It is certainly encouraging when we host young people from the various schools in the county. Students from North Decatur High School's social studies and writing classes, with teachers John Pratt and Margaret Davis, South Decatur Elementary students, St. Mary's "Little Hoosiers," and Greensburg Elementary's Fifth Grade High Ability with teacher Sally Robbins, all enjoyed end-of-school field trips to the museum. We want the Historical Society Museum to be a "second school." Students and teachers: you are welcome!

"Out of the mouths..."

During an end of school tour of the Historical Society Museum by members of the St. Mary's Little Hoosiers history club, one youngster, fascinated by such items as the sad iron, the hand washing machine, and the rug beater, asked, in all seriousness, "Is this what is meant by, 'going green'?"

The Bulletin

Hambone

By Nick Williams

People called him, "Hambone." I never knew his real name, but he had the best baseball card collection in town, and he had a very warm heart. He had doubles and triples of most cards, and at least two complete sets of Topps cards dating back several years. He even collected the Red Man tobacco cards, Army War cards, and the player cards of the new professional football league, which we all felt was just a passing fancy.

Hambone was an orphan boy of about twelve or thirteen who lived at the old three-story Odd Fellows Home at the east end of both Central Avenue and North Street. He always wore a blue jean bib overall which hung askew because one strap of the bib was torn in two. Since his hand-painted red and black, reconditioned, 24-inch, no fender bike had a missing chain guard, his right pants leg was always rolled up to his knee. Sometimes his socks matched-more often they did not. His old black Converse All-Stars had broken laces, and he would proudly display the extra Gil Hodges Brooklyn Dodger card he used to patch the hole in the sole of his worn-out left shoe. Most days in both summer and winter Hambone wore an old blue sock cap on the very back of his head; in winter he wore a tattered brown three-quarter-length coat with a broken zipper.

After school each day, and occasionally also at recess, Hambone showed up to play baseball or basketball. Unfortunately, our teachers wouldn't let him play at recess because he didn't go to school. After school, however, he would play, and each of us boys wanted Hambone on his side to ensure a win. Hambone had long orange-red hair which badly needed cutting. His scraggly locks hung over his eyes and covered the splotchy freckles that defined most of his face. None of that mattered, though, because he always stuck up for the little guy, and he had a smile that ran all the way across his thin, narrow face, and he was always happy when he was with us.

I say "us" because Fred Jones, Bobby Roper, Terry Mahuron, and Willa Jo Elder, plus a few others, and I used to walk home together after school, and Hambone would walk with us pushing his bike. He'd walk all of us home, even though we were two or three years younger than he was. He would then ride his bike back to his Odd Fellows home.

Our folks were always a little suspect of Hambone and his disheveled urchin look until one mid-summer day when he rode his no-fender red and yellow bike up our alley. Mom and I were re-arranging the boulders in her beloved hillside rock garden when Hambone, seeing that Mom soon was going to have a baby, asked if he could help. Since Mom and I had spent most of the afternoon hoisting rocks up and down the hill in our backyard, Mom changed her opinion of Hambone-long hair and all.

Mom gave us each fifty cents for our work, plus an extra nickel and suggested we go down to Sid Small's grocery on the corner of Lincoln and First Street to get an ice-cold popsicle for a reward. From his second-story room, Terry Mahuron heard us coming up Lincoln Street and asked his mom, Evelyn, who later married Mr. Al Webster and moved to West Walnut Street, if he could go along. Terry had the second-best baseball card collection in town, and he always looked for an opportunity to trade with Hambone who kept a cigar box of "traders" tied to the seat of his old beat-up bicycle.

When we got to Sid's market, Fred Jones and Johnny Rhodes were already there, drinking large bottles of Coke with a salty bag of Planters peanuts dumped inside the bottles. They had been shooting hoops at Rhodes' house which, other than Wenning's Funeral Home parking lot, sported the best home court on the east side of town.

Rhodes lived on First Street, just a half block west of Sid's Market, so we all went there for a quick game or two of "Horse." Hambone and Rhodes won, just as we knew they would, and then everyone left for home. Fred, Terry, Hambone, and I went south on Lincoln Street. Fred reached his home at 618 North Lincoln. Further on, at the corner of Walnut and Lincoln, Hambone said he was going up past Gettler's junk yard so he wouldn't have to go past Sheriff Clyde Marlowe's house on Central Avenue. No one knew why, and no one asked.

Most days in the summer afternoons we'd all be at the rear of the *Greensburg Daily News* building on the southeast corner of Main and Broadway. Before the papers came out for us to fold and deliver, we'd hang out telling tales and trading baseball cards. Those who could afford to spend extra money went across Broadway for a burger at the Nickel Nook, which was right next to the Tree Theater (earlier called the *Strand*), where you could see a first-run movie, a serialized cowboy episode, a cartoon, and the Movietone News for twelve cents. A nickel would buy a Coke and another nickel a Baby Ruth candy bar, and these weren't midget servings, either. If you went in with a quarter, you'd still have three cents when you left.

Across the alley to the south of the News office was Hogg's Market. That's where we bought most of our baseball cards, where we'd play the pinball machines, and where we'd sometimes get a snack. It was kinda funny about the snacks, though: the guys from the west side of town would always get an RC Cola and a Moon Pie, where-

The Bulletin

(Continued from page 5)

as the East Side guys got Coca Cola and Planters Peanuts. Cultural diversity has been around for a long time.

Daily News paperboys made about \$8.00 per week; Star carriers made about \$12.00 per week. Regardless, the first dollar from each payday went for new baseball cards. Topps Bubble Gum must have had a kick-back deal with all the dentists in the country because all that sugar quickly caused severe cavities. Hambone was only a substitute carrier, but he just loved to drool over Jimmy Joe Nelson's black and silver Schwinn, the "Cadillac" of "boydom" bicycles-a bike that he would never be able to own. Occasionally, he would fill in for some carrier who didn't show up for one reason or another, but then some people on the route would complain to the newspaper office because Hambone didn't look as well-dressed or as "nice" as they thought a newsboy should. So...what's the big deal? They got their newspaper, didn't they?

My father, Lowell Williams, was a salesman for Charles H. Johnston's wholesale grocery company, and he got an employee discount on items for his family's personal consumption. If I'd been extraordinarily helpful at home, washing dishes or windows, or pushing the sweeper for Mom, sometimes Dad brought me a full box of Topps baseball cards as a reward. A whole box of untouched baseball cards-that was like striking it rich! Of course you wouldn't want to open them all by yourself; it was much more fun to spend the whole afternoon opening them with your friends. You wouldn't want to be alone when you found a Stan Musial, a Micky Mantle, or a Warren Spahn! I'd call Mahuron and Jones on the party-line. All the phones on the same line had special rings, so the persons who weren't called were not supposed to listen in. Of course all this did was to let us kids talk to each other kinda like a modern conference call, but a whole lot cheaper. During our conversations, we would agree to meet at the corner of Central and Lincoln, and we would all ride to the Odd Fellows Home to get Hambone, who'd trade for the seconds or thirds found in my "treasure chest" of cards. For what reason Hambone resided at the Odd Fellows Home, I never found out. After falling in with us boys, Hambone vied with Terry Mahuron for ownership of the **BEST BASEBALL CARD COLLECTION** in Greensburg.

To notify Hambone of our arrival at the Odd Fellows Home, we would pound on the steel pipe fire escape connected to the second and third floors of the old, castle-like structure which was complete with steeples, spires, and smoking chimneys. In a minute or two, Hambone rumbled down the fire escape which, needless to say, did not set well with the residents or the administration. Before leaving the grounds, however, Hambone took care of a little chore he had imposed upon himself.

Hambone walked east to the Clarksburg Road side of the Odd Fellows property and stopped before two crude cages made of steel pipe and chicken wire. These cages, each about ten feet square, contained a number of dead tree branches and several wooden troughs. Imprisoned in these cages were six or eight raccoons. These gentle animals were in the cages because they had "harvested" some of the corn crop before the county agrarians had a chance to do so. Rather than destroy the animals for their crimes, the local farmers would trap the raccoons and secure them in jail at the Odd Fellows Home.

Hambone felt the punishment was too severe for the crime: "How much could the little fellers eat, anyway," Hambone asked. He didn't have much to spare from his meager meals at the home, but he always brought the raccoons something to eat-three times each day. How funny they looked as they ate with their little human-like hands...after first washing them in the water troughs! The raccoons all knew why Hambone was there, and they came straight to him as he knelt and fed them his table scraps through the wires of their jail. His wry smile and soft, poorly syntaxed voice, as well as his situation, spoke straight to the usually callous hearts of the rest of us. It was such great fun feeding the raccoons that nearly all of the kids in our neighborhood were saving scraps and having their parents drive them to the cages on Sunday afternoons. Adults and kids alike enjoyed feeding the mini-bandits, each wearing its own little mask.

Mom was not the only person Hambone helped with chores. One afternoon while I was mowing our back lawn, I saw him helping Mr. George Deiwert, Adeline Loper's ninety-year-old father, prune and tie the many vines on their grape arbor. Sometimes, I'd be riding in the car with Dad and see Hambone washing someone's windows, bucket hanging from a hook on the ladder, drying rags dangling from his ragged bib overalls, sweat dripping from his shaggy red hair, yet still waving with the happy smile that was always on his face.

Editor's Note

Nick William's *Hambone* story will appear in two successive issues of the *Bulletin*. The personal narrative deals with the timeless theme of growing up, yet it is also timely because of the references to the state Odd Fellows home which was once a prominent feature of the city's architectural and historical heritage. The last vestiges of the structure are gone now that the fountain and statue of Rebekah have been removed from the grounds. Nick's story is only one of many that could be told about the impact, either directly or indirectly, that the Odd Fellows Home has had on so many people.

Pole Raising (Continued from page 2)

I am sure my father never dreamed that "pole raising" really started in Boston in 1765, spread across the country to become a part of his boyhood memories, and continued even to the present day.

Anna Lee (Hickman) Linville,
Lexington, Virginia,

July 25, 1968

Dryden Park...? Where's That?

Hundreds of people drive by this small triangular plot of ground every day, but probably no more than five or six, if that many, say to themselves, "There's Dryden Park." This site, bounded by Michigan Avenue, Ireland Street, and West Walnut Street is named for a Mrs. Dryden who had a hat shop nearby at 532 N. Ireland in the early 1900's. A Daughters of the American Revolution monument commemorating the completion of the Michigan Road in 1837 now occupies the site. The flowers are planted and tended by members of the "Night Bloomers" Garden Club, and Greensburg Fire Department members keep Dryden Park mowed and well-trimmed. The monument bears a plaque which reads:

*'Though the Pathfinders die,
the paths remain open.'*

"Give Me That Old Time Chautauqua!"

On Thursday, May 1st, of this year, North Decatur High School offered its students and the general public the opportunity to observe, and be involved in, a form of public entertainment popular during the last half of the 19th Century and the first two decades of the 20th. The Chautauqua at North Decatur combined popular education with entertainment in the form of lectures, demonstrations, concerts, and a book signing. The day's events highlighted a lecture by Ray Boomhower, author and Indiana historian. Mr. Boomhower is also the editor of *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History*, the quarterly magazine of the Indiana Historical Society. Other notables present and giving talks were Ruthanne Gordon, a staff member of WISH TV news, and Judge Mark Bailey, who is assigned to the U.S. Federal District of Southern Indiana. Both Ms. Gordon and Judge Bailey are NDHS graduates. Ending the day was a concert by professional opera singers from Columbus, Indiana. The North Decatur Chautauqua was organized by Mr. John Pratt, NDHS social studies teacher. Mr. Pratt also served as master of ceremonies, and he was assisted and encouraged by the administration, faculty, students, and patrons of North Decatur High School.

A Big "Thank You" goes to the Greensburg Kiwanis Club for its donation of a cassette/CD player to the Historical Society of Decatur County. The player will be very useful.

Thank you!

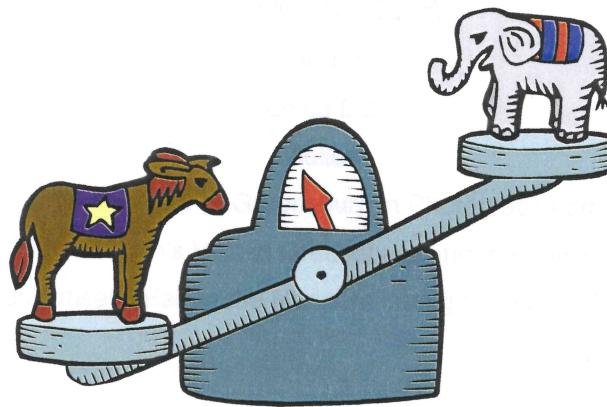


Native American Artifacts at the Museum

An exceptional collection of American Indian artifacts is now on display in the Museum Gallery. The display has been arranged and identified by Mr. Ben Morris, a retired National Parks Service archaeologist, Carrie Shumaker, a recent graduate of IUPUC, and Cory Parks, a senior at Greensburg Community High School. Both Carrie and Cory are Historical Society volunteers. Included in the collection are artifacts from these archaeological time periods:

- Paleo-Indian--13000-8000 B.C.
- Archaic-----8000-1000 B.C.
- Woodland---1000 B.C.-800 A.D.
- Mississippian--800-1500 A.D.
- Historical-----1500-1850 A.D.

Of especial significance is the fact that these items have been found in Decatur County. Included in the display is a collection of "points," crafted by Mr. Greg Meyer. Be certain to visit this display. You will be impressed!



" Out of Balance "

**Historical Society of Decatur County
Coming Events
EXHIBITS AT THE MUSEUM**

House -Prom Dress Exhibit – May-August, 2008

School Days Exhibit – September - October

Gallery- Native American Exhibit – August – November, 2008

Textile Display Room - A Stitch in Time – Display of Stitching Samples - September – October

A Tip of the Hat – Hats through the Years - November - March

Christmas Displays

House – Annual Christmas Décor with Train Exhibit

MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS

17th of August (Sunday) – Museum Gallery – 2:00

Identification of Indian Artifacts with Ben Morris and How to Make Projectile Points with Greg Meyer

Events for 2009

House

Wedding Exhibit

Gallery

Jan.-June, 2009 – History of Greensburg in Photographs and Documents

July-November, 2009 – Lincoln's Visit to Greensburg and the Civil War in Decatur County

There will also be an Artisans Fair at the Museum during the week of the Sesquicentennial.

Editor of the Bulletin

George Granholt
E-mail articles and ideas to
Email: gholt2@core.com

Decatur County Historian & Genealogist

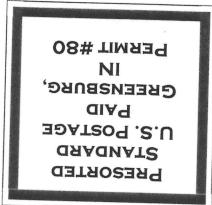
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Tri-County Genealogical Society

Irene Krieger
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“The Bulletin”

Check your label for your membership renewal date.



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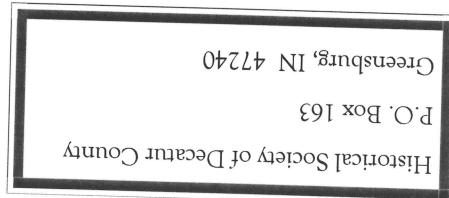
Diana Springmier

Historical Society of Decatur County Museum

Museum Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 10:00 to 2:00
Saturday 10:00 to 2:00 and Sunday 1:00 to 4:00 –April
thru December

Museum office: 663-2764
Email: dechissoc@etczone.com
After hours, call 663-2997 or 663-5141

Society est. 1959
Museum est. 1984





Vol. 13 No.4

Historical Society of Decatur County

The Bulletin

Winter 2008

Greensburg, Indiana

Economic distress will teach men, if anything, that realities are less dangerous than fancies, that fact finding is more effective than fault-finding.

*Carl Becker
1935*

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

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The Native American Artifacts Exhibit

A Retrospective

During the months of August through November of 2008, the Decatur County Historical Society has been hosting a most impressive display of Native American artifacts. This exhibit, planned and arranged by a retired National Parks archaeologist, Mr. Ben Morris, consists of a wide variety of implements made by Native American craftsmen over a period of more than ten thousand years. The Native American archaeological ages represented are the Paleo (13000 B.C.-8000 B.C.), the Archaic (8000 B.C.-1000 B.C.), the Woodland (1000 B.C.-A.D. 800.), the Mississippian (A.D. 800-A.D 1500), and the Historic (A.D. 1500- A.D. 1850). Interestingly, while the exhibit covers a vast extent of time, the area from which the artifacts have been recovered is quite small. With only a few exceptions, all of the items have been found in Decatur County.

While primary credit for the exhibit goes to Mr. Morris, he has been ably assisted by Professor Calvin Davis; by Greensburg High School senior, Cory Parks; by Museum staff members Charity Mitchell and Susan Ricke; and by Museum volunteers, Lois Carol McCormack and Carrie Shumaker. The artifacts were loaned by a number of individuals, and the Historical Society is most appreciative of their willingness to make the exhibit possible. A note of appreciation also goes to Greg Meyer, whose display of "points" is a testament to his skill as a 21st Century "knapper." By the time of the publishing of this issue of *The Bulletin*, the Native American Artifacts exhibit will have been viewed by approximately 500 individuals and ten groups. Included in these numbers are those who heard interpretive lectures presented by Mr. Morris and Mr. Meyer.

This exhibit offers a truly multi-cultural and cross-generational experience which endorses the fact that those Native Americans who lived so many years, even eons, ago were actually living in "modern" times. Those early Americans realized a need, discovered the necessary raw materials, applied their intellect, developed a technology, and utilized their craftsmanship in an effort to make their lives a little easier. Aren't we striving to do the same today?

President's Letter

Autumn is my favorite time of year. After a summer of being surrounded by the tall corn, it's nice to be able to see all the way west to the hills of Marietta again. The warm afternoons and cool evenings remind us just how good it is to be alive. The colors, the crisp air, and community activities also make it a busy time of year. Our museum continues to be an active center for those who want to contribute to the recording and archiving of the history of our community. It would take several full-time employees to do all the work that our volunteer staff manages year after year. A current example of a very successful exhibit is the Native American Archaeology display presented by Ben Morris. This is a world-class display of Indian artifacts found in this area. The displays are well-presented with good background information. Make a point to see this exhibit soon.

We continue to work on the society's web-site, www.decaturcountyhistory.org. We want the web-site to be a resource for anyone interested in the history of the county. Historical documents will be available for viewing. Current events related to the museum and the society will be on a bulletin board on the site. Plus, future events and programs will be posted so that the web-site visitor can plan in advance for upcoming events. The web-site is one of several efforts the society is making to get more members in the community. The society and the museum enjoy great support from the community already. We want to spread the word about what a great facility we have here. We want everyone to know they are welcome.

December is a favorite time of the year for me, too. Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's are all within a few weeks of one another. In some respects the season has become a marathon of shopping, parties, and reunions. It is certainly the busiest time of the year. However, I hope you are not so busy that you cannot visit the museum. We have new Christmas ornaments in the Gift Shop, plus our new 2009 calendar depicting vintage images of the tree on the courthouse tower. Also, if you have not seen the toy trains exhibit at the museum in recent years, you need to see it this year. This exhibit will be the best ever.

Merry Christmas and the Happiest of New Years!

Tom Barker
President
Historical Society of Decatur County

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Individual	\$ 15.00 per year
Family	\$ 25.00 per year
Patron	\$ 50.00 per year
Historian	\$100.00 per year
Lifetime	\$500.00 (one-time payment)

Circle type of membership at left.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Membership dues for 2009 can be mailed in now.

Mail to: Historical Society, P.O. Box 163, Greensburg, IN 47240 - Attn: Dues

Christmas Open House, 2008

'Mingle with Kringle" is the theme for the Museum's 2008 Open House, scheduled for Sunday, December 14th, from 1:00 P.M.-4:P.M., as Santa will be present to regale children, both young in age and young in spirit. His mailbox will be on the front porch so children can mail their letters to the North Pole, and Mrs. Claus will greet guests at the door when she is not keeping track of her husband. This may be difficult, since many traditional Santas from different cultures around the world will be holding court in both north and south parlors. The north parlor's tree this year will be decorated by St. Mary's fourth grade students along with members of St. Mary's Little Hoosiers Junior Historical Society.

The gingerbread decorated 1860's kitchen will be designed by Jane Brown, and the Victorian dining room will be in the talented hands of reed Schuster. A Mexican Fiesta will spread cheer in the children's room upstairs.

Traditional bread pudding, prepared by Gladys Pike as a gift for the Museum's Celebration of Christmas, and a variety of pastries baked by Society members will be on the dining room table for all visitors to enjoy. Accompanied by Willadene Wood, Bob Rooker will present a holiday musical program in the south parlor, and other musicians will be performing as well.

Again this year, Lionel trains will be in the upstairs gallery through all of December. This popular exhibit, again on loan by the Decatur County Highball Lines Model Train Club, will be chugging away on the tracks. Horns will blare, whistles will shriek, smoke stacks will puff, and lights will flash. An era years past will be recreated for every little boy and for many little girls as well. Actually, everybody enjoys the trains. Get on track and join us!

A visit to the Historical Society Museum during the Open House on December 14th will prompt every Scrooge to proclaim, "Ho! Ho! Ho!" instead of "Bah! Humbug"! In fact, all will leave with the "Ghost of Christmas" in their hearts.

5th Sundays in the Sesquicentennial Year, 2009

All concerts to be held at the Presbyterian Church at 2:30 p.m.

March 29th, 2009 - Greensburg Junior High School Music Ensemble, Clabbergirls Kitchen Band

May 31st, 2009 -The Mossburg Strings

August 30th, 2009- Carolyn H. Cleland (Harpist)

Nov. 29th, 2009- The Murrays

Mark these dates on your calendar!

Gift Shop

The Christmas ornaments for 2008 have arrived in a burst of blue. The design this year celebrates the 150 year anniversary for St. Mary's Catholic Church in Greensburg. Cost is only \$10.00

Still available are the undated courthouse ornament and several designs from past years.

Since the weather is beginning to chill, a fine gift might be one of our Decatur County throws. This is a good cozy cover for cuddling up with one of our books or videos. It is also cozy enough to just nap.

Other items of interest are available in the gift shop. There are only about 31 more museum shopping days until Christmas! (The gift shop is open four times a week.)

Hambone

By Nick Williams

(Continued from last Bulletin)

Hambone walked east to the Clarksburg Road side of the Odd Fellows property and stopped before two crude cages made of steel pipe and chicken wire. These cages, each about ten feet square, contained a number of dead tree branches and several wooden troughs. Imprisoned in these cages were six or eight raccoons. These gentle animals were in the cages because they had "harvested" some of the corn crop before the county agrarians had a chance to do so. Rather than destroy the animals for their crimes, the local farmers would trap the raccoons and secure them in jail at the Odd Fellows Home.

Hambone felt the punishment was too severe for the crime: "How much could the little fellers eat, anyway," Hambone asked. He didn't have much to spare from his meager meals at the home, but he always brought the raccoons something to eat—three times each day. How funny they looked as they ate with their little human-like hands...after first washing them in the water troughs! The raccoons all knew why Hambone was there, and they came straight to him as he knelt and fed them his table scraps through the wires of their jail. His wry smile and soft, poorly syntaxed voice, as well as his situation, spoke straight to the usually callous hearts of the rest of us.

It was such great fun feeding the raccoons that nearly all of the kids in our neighborhood were saving scraps and having their parents drive them to the cages on Sunday afternoons. Adults and kids alike enjoyed feeding the mini-bandits, each wearing its own little mask.

Mom was not the only person Hambone helped with chores. One afternoon while I was mowing our back lawn, I saw him helping Mr. George Deiwert, Adeline Loper's ninety-year-old father, prune and tie the many vines on their grape arbor. Sometimes, I'd be riding in the car with Dad and see Hambone washing someone's windows, bucket hanging from a hook on the ladder, drying rags dangling from his ragged bib overalls, sweat dripping from his shaggy red hair, yet still waving with the happy smile that was always on his face. My sister, who is also my life-long pal, was born Cynthia Susan Williams on Bastille Day in 1954. The temperature on that day was 100 degrees. Kids were not allowed to go into the maternity ward of the hospital so, to see my sister, I rode my bike to Memorial Hospital and Mom held Cindy up to the window of her second floor room. How tiny she looked from the ground. Mom was sharing her room with Mrs. Sarah Deiwert, who had just given birth to twin boys, Edwin and Edward Deiwert. As I recall, my friend Mickey Wilke's little sister, Sally Wickens, was born about the same time.

Perhaps a week or ten days after Mom and Cindy came home from the hospital, a knock was heard on the door of our East Central home. On that hot Sunday afternoon, after finishing dinner, Grandma and Grandpa Williams were relaxing in the front parlor while Mom and Dad were doing the dishes. Grandpa Howard, "Butch the Barber," with his ever-present King Edward cigar clenched between his teeth, answered the door. There stood my crumpled, scraggly, friend, Hambone, with something in his hands he said was for Mom and my new sister, Cindy.

Grandpa let him in and, with Grandma, led Hambone to the kitchen. He looked at Mom and Dad and said, "I brung you and the little babe this, Missus; I hope that's all right" From behind his back, Hambone offered a tiny pink rattle with a little pastel blue bow tied around it. Mom had tears in her eyes and so did Grandma Williams; Grandpa chomped heavily on his King Ed-

(Continued from page 4)

ward and went to the dining room to blow his nose. When Grandpa returned, he told me to get two bed sheets from the hall closet, and he asked Mom to get her hair-cutting scissors. Grandpa had me spread one sheet on the kitchen floor and placed a chair in the middle of it.

"Sit right down here, Son," Grandpa said to Hambone. "We're gonna give you a new haircut." Hambone dutifully sat in the chair; Grandpa tied the other sheet around Hambone's neck and cut his hair. Mom brought my sister in so Hambone could see her and, though she was too small to play with the rattle, she did later on. Grandma Williams cut a piece of apple pie and placed a scoop of vanilla ice cream on top for everyone, and Hambone left with his stomach full, his ears lowered, and his ever-present smile spread across his face. He simply said, "Thanks very much, folks."

School started not long after that, and no one saw much of Hambone as winter neared. Oh, now and then we'd spot him a couple of streets away, raking leaves for someone or taking someone's trash to the curb; but now he didn't come around a lot.

When the weather got colder, and I did see him, he'd have on his frazzled brown coat with the broken zipper and his faded blue sock cap pulled forward and covering his ears. It made me feel kind of empty and sad in the pit of my stomach. I wished I could do something for Hambone, but I didn't know what it would be.

On Thanksgiving Day our family, as was its custom, had its sumptuous family dinner complete with the good china and all the leaves for the dining room table. My Uncle Bob Williams, noted for his coverage of high school basketball for *The Indianapolis Star*, and his wife, Florence, arrived for dinner. Joining them were Charles and Edna Fightmaster, and Edna's mom, Lilly Goldschmidt. What a splendid feast we enjoyed, and how wonderfully blessed we were.

On the following weekend Mom, Dad, baby Cindy, and I all piled into Dad's new sales car, and we drove to Metamora for, believe it or not, another "dinner." With Mom's seven brothers and sisters and all the children and grandchildren, this was a feast even larger and more extravagant than our earlier one.

Strangely, on the way home, I begin to feel both sad and guilty. "Mom and Dad," I said, "I wonder what Hambone did for Thanksgiving...and I wonder how he'll spend Christmas. I mean, we've got so much, and so many people to love, but Hambone doesn't have anyone. I'll bet he doesn't even get a Christmas present. It isn't fair!" Dad glanced over at Mom, then at me, and said, "Nick, that's a good point. What do you think we should do-ask him for Christmas dinner or something?"

"I don't know," I responded. "He doesn't have any decent clothes to wear, and I think he would feel out of place at a fancy dinner table."

Dad said, "Well, maybe we can get him some new gloves and a scarf to wear around his neck."

This suggestion excited me, and I immediately added that I would give up my allowance money to get Hambone a big box of baseball cards. My dad agreed that this would be a good idea, but he suggested that I consider helping Mom by watching Cindy a little bit more. You know, I smiled all the way back to Greensburg, and sitting in the back next to Cindy where she was buckled in her car seat became a lot more enjoyable.

After a couple of weeks Mom went to Lerman's Department Store which was managed by

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our neighbor, Mr. Al Page, and she bought a pair of leather gloves and a scarf to match to give to Hambone. Dad had already procured the baseball cards, and we wrapped the gifts nicely, placed them in a box, and Mom added a fancy bow and a gift card. A week before Christmas, I put Hambone's gifts in the basket of my bike and headed for the Odd Fellows Home. Snow began to fall, and I rode straight into an east wind. Believe me, it was a long, cold ride.

When I reached the fire escape, I was frozen, but I spied a fallen tree branch and began beating on the metal chute to rouse my friend. No one came rattling down, so I whacked the pipe again, even though my hands were stinging from the effort. Still, Hambone didn't appear.

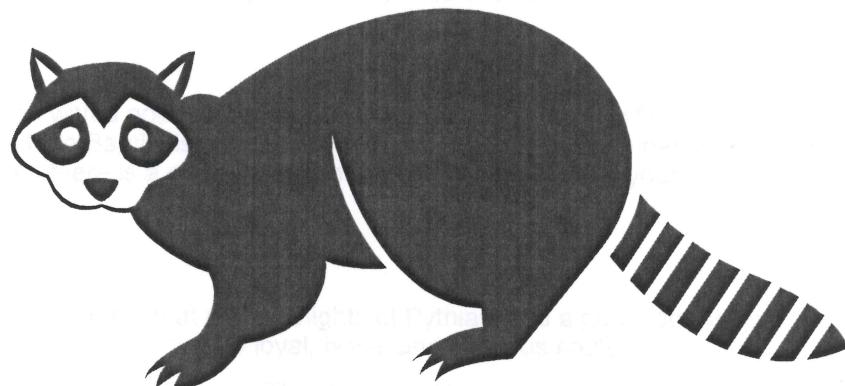
However, after another desperate bang or two, a lady in a white kitchen uniform came to the back delivery door. It was beginning to get dark, and the snow was falling harder. The lady yelled at me, "What do you want. Why you beatin' and bangin' on the fire escape-stop it right now!"

I said, "Sorry, Ma'am, I'm just looking for Hambone. I've got some Christmas presents to give him."

The lady, in a dismissive tone, snapped, "Well, he ain't here no more. He's gone!" With that finality, she slammed the delivery door and turned out the light.

I looked around and, I guess out of desperation, walked through the heavily falling snow to the raccoon cages. No raccoons came scurrying to greet me. It was very cold and dark, and there was nothing I could do. I got on my bike and, with a heavy heart, slowly pedaled home.

I started to think... "I'll bet Hambone got adopted for Christmas, and before he left, he let all the raccoons out to be free, too." I was kinda sad, but happy as well. I never saw Hambone again. People called him Hambone, and he had the BEST BASEBALL CARD COLLECTION in Greensburg, a cheerful smile, and a warm heart. No, I never knew Hambone's real name, but I knew Hambone just the same.



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Letts

The Busy Bustling Little Town

Get aboard the Big Four train at Greensburg and travel southwest a distance of ten miles, and you'll hear the conductor call aloud: "Letts," the name of the busiest town of its size in the state of Indiana. It is a veritable bee hive of industry—no drones in the little town, the citizens do not need and don't harbor them.

The town of Letts is thirty-two years old, six acres of ground having been staked off and the town platted in the year 1881, by Messrs. Jacob Stout, George T. Davis and John S. Adams, all of whom have since passed away.

At the time the town was platted Allen W. Lett owned and operated a general store near the place, and it is from his name the town derived its name—Letts. Mr. Lett left the town some twenty years since, going to Cincinnati where he engaged and is still in the commission business.

The only other "business houses" in the town at that time were a saw mill operated by William Worland and a blacksmith shop owned by Edward Milton. But, as "mighty" oaks from little acorns grow," so has the town of Letts grown, until today it has a population of two hundred people and is recognized as one among the greatest little business marts in all our county.

In every direction from Letts—east, west, north and south—lie broad, rich, productive acres of as good fertile soil as the sun ever shone upon, and these acres are tilled by as thrifty, prosperous and intelligent a set of farmers as ever cultivated the soil. A great majority of the farmers in the vicinity of Letts own their farms, have magnificent homes, well-kept lawns, all necessary and up-to-date outbuildings, such as horse, cattle, hog and sheep barns and houses. In fact, Letts and vicinity is a community in which anyone should be proud to live.

In the early spring of 1881 the Big Four Railroad completed laying its tracks, and in February of that year the first iron horse pulled its load of human freight through the little town, and at the present time it is said by railroad officials that a greater amount of freight is shipped to and from Letts than from any other country town between Benton Harbor, Michigan, and Louisville, Kentucky, and it is right here in Letts that the farmer finds a ready market for every thing that he produces.

Public Schools

The people of Letts and vicinity are proud of their public schools and justly so. The school building is modern and up-to-date, with its large and splendid school hall, fitted up with a commodious stage and fine piano. It is heated by a furnace, and cost in the neighborhood of fifteen thousand dollars.

No better corps of instructors can be found in the county, and are as follows: Prof. H. H. Wilson, superintendent high school department; Miss Stella Moore, assistant superintendent; Miss Mary McKay, instructor in music and art; T. F. Hargitt, instructor in sixth, seventh and eighth grades; Miss Laura Steinling, instructor in third, fourth and fifth grades; Miss Thursa Wasson, instructor domestic science; Prof. T. F. Hargitt, instructor in agriculture, and last but by no means least, G. J. Armstrong (1852-1918) * and his wife (Lettie) (1857-1929) * are the very efficient custodians of the building.

In the primary department there are twenty pupils, in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades thirty-six pupils; in the third, fourth and fifth grades there are twenty-nine pupils, and in the high school thirty-three students—making a total enrollment of one hundred and eighteen.

The News congratulates Trustee J. H. Pumphrey on his very wise choice in selecting the above named able and efficient corps of instructors. First class.

Churches

Letts has two churches—each with a good membership. The Methodist pulpit is filled by Rev. Mr. Williams, of Westport, every other Sunday, while that of the Baptist is supplied by Rev. Mr. Marshall. Each denomination has a splendid and well-attended Sunday school, in which there is a great interest manifest by both old and young.

Knights of Pythias

There's but one secret order in the town, that of the Knights of Pythias, and a good, strong, live, working lodge it is, with a membership that numbers one hundred and twelve loyal, brave and cautious souls.

The Business Men

(Continued from page 7)

One of the leading hardware and implement firms in the county is located right in Letts, and familiar household words throughout that section are: "The Letts Hardware Co." The firm is composed of Messrs. K. L. Adams (1870-1956)* and Urso McCorkle, and two greater hustlers or a better mated business team was never "hitched" up. They are the real live wires, and push their immense business in a way that causes people to sit up and take notice. Not only do they carry a complete line of hardware, but have on hands all kinds of stoves, wire fencing, automobile tires, fertilizers, and in fact anything and everything from a knitting needle to a threshing machine. Their sales of fertilizer have been unusually large this year, and they attribute this to the fact that they carry at all seasons of the year an abundant supply of the "sweet scented stuff." Their sales in every department for the first half of this year were larger than ever before in the history of the Letts Hardware Co. for the same period of time. Merit will tell.

A general store is conducted by Fraley & Welch, and it is stocked with an attractive line of goods that take with the people. Their business is large and on the increase. They believe in giving the public a fair deal by giving each patron the worth of his money everytime.

When it comes to general blacksmithing and repair work, all who know John Ernest Carder (1877-1950) * know he does not have to take a back seat for any one, neither does he have to "retire to the rear to rally" when it comes to repairing all kinds of machinery and doing automobile repair work; as a mechanic, Mr. Carder stands at the head of the list, and without a superior in Decatur County. He believes that a satisfied customer is a man's best advertisement; therefore, he studies to please.

The McCammon Bros. (Elbert (1881-1950)* and John C. (1880-1966)*

****(Editors note- I believe these were the two brothers; the article speaks about RW)** own and operate a general store that is a credit to Letts, and that the citizens of the town and community fully appreciate the fact, is clearly demonstrated by the liberal patronage accorded them. All who enter their store receive prompt and polite attention, and find a large assortment of goods of the very best quality from which to make selections.

A restaurant and confectionery is owned and conducted by Mrs. Levi Gardner, in a commendable and successful manner.

Dr. John A. Welch, (1873-1934) * physician and surgeon, is not only a first-class, up-to-date physician, but is one of the best fellows you ever met. He has an elegant home, well-equipped office, including the x-ray, and is one of the permanent fixtures of Letts; he has an extensive and increasing practice, and gives every attention to many patients.

Howard Williams is the tonsorial artist and manipulates the keen-edged razor that removes the shaggy beard from many faces.

The leading hotel and livery barn is managed by Township Trustee James H. Pumphrey, and is popular with the traveling public.

The Logan Bros. are the hustling real estate dealers of the town. And they are always ready to trade or sell you real estate of some kind.

A dress making establishment is conducted by Mrs. Rachel Williams, and all work is done in the highest style of art.

The fence builders of this neck o' the woods are George Armstrong (1887-1914) * and Schuyler Tibbett, (1876-1961) * and they are good ones.

Ulysses S. Parker, (1867-1939)*, Perry Capper (1871-1938)* and Mahan Johnson are the contractors and builders for this section, and are busy as bees.

For nearly a quarter of a century John N. Jordan (1837-1922) * has served in the capacity of Justice of the Peace, and his fair and impartial decisions in all cases have won for him legions of friends. He also represents the "Old Reliable" Continental Fire Insurance Co.

Letts can boast of a wireless telegraph station, operated by Earl Capper, (1899-1965) * a youth of only 14 summers. He has his instruments in the home of his grand-father, Esquire John N. Jordan. Concerning Earl and his wireless telegraphy we will have more to say later on.

Samuel Ketchum (1836-1934) * makes and repairs harness for all who call on him, and he gives splendid satisfaction in leather and in work.

A saw mill is owned and operated by James Scott, (1851-1923)* and is a great convenience for all who want anything in

(Continued on page 9)

his line.

The elevator and lumber yards are owned and managed by Messrs. Moore & Crise, and they do a large and highly satisfactory business both in grain and in lumber and all kinds of building material and do contract work on bridges and gravel roads.

"Your Uncle Jim" (James H.) Cox (1844-1923) * is still postmaster to the entire satisfaction of the majority of the patrons of the office. He is at his office from five o'clock in the morning until about nine at night, and never tires of trying to accommodate all callers.

Letts has three rural routes leading from her borders, and the carriers are: Allen V. Beagles, (1851-1933)*, Harry Black (1882-1949)* and Earl Taggart (1890-1963)*.

Last but not least is the broad, smooth and well-kept gravel roads leading in and out of the town from every direction, a benefit and an advantage to both the town and the country surrounding.

NOTE-

*- Mt Aerie Cemetery, Letts, Indiana

** I am looking for any pictures that our readers may have of Letts: their buildings, their residences, the people, the church, school or anything close by. I would like to make copies and put them in the archives at the museum. The originals will be returned to you in a safe and timely manner. Thank you, RW.

This article was first printed in Oct, 1913, in the *Greensburg Standard* newspaper, and it was edited and added to by Russell Wilhoit, Decatur County Historian, Oct, 2008.

This is the 11th, in a series of articles about the small towns located in Decatur County.

Next issue we will journey over to Fugit twp and visit the small town of St. Maurice which was founded in 1869, so I will see you next time. Russell

Coming Events

Christmas Decorations at the Museum: "Mingle w Kringle" December 6th-28th, 2008

Lionel Christmas Trains in the Gallery: December 13th-21st, 2008

Christmas Open House, December 14th, 2008, 1:00 p.m.

House Exhibits for 2009

Wedding Exhibit (June-October, 2009)

Gallery Exhibits for 2009

Greensburg History in Photographs, Artifacts, and Documents: Sesquicentennial Exhibit, January-June, 2009.

Lincoln in Greensburg and the Civil War in Decatur County, July-November, 2009

Textile Exhibit Room, 2009

Tip of the Hat (January-May) Hats at the Museum

Wedding Exhibit (June-October) (Museum's Collection)

Annual Business Meeting: 4:30 p.m. February 5th, 2009 Historical Society of Decatur County Museum

Annual Dinner & Program: 6:00 p.m. April 18th, 2009. Presbyterian Church

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“The Bulletin”

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Historical Society of Decatur County Museum

Museum Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 10:00 to 2:00
Saturday 10:00 to 2:00 and Sunday 1:00 to 4:00 - April
thru December
Museum phone/fax: 663-2764
Email: dechissoc@etczone.net
After hours call 663-2997 or 663-5141

Museum est. 1984
Society est. 1957



See page 9 for the exciting
things happening at
the museum.

